



Email this article
Print this article
Most popular pages

[Click to send](#)
[Click to print](#)
[Today](#) | [This Week](#)

14 in race for health care board

Christina Leonard
The Arizona Republic
Oct. 22, 2004 12:00 AM

The five members of Maricopa County's Special Healthcare District board will not only control the county hospital, but they also will determine how much extra taxpayers will chip in for its survival.

Health care advocates say the new officials will have tremendous power over the future of the region's health care. But the race faces stiff competition for voters' attention.

Julia Greene, director of Arizona for Health Care, said her group has worked hard to educate voters about the race. The group has hosted four candidate forums. But Greene said it's been difficult against the "noise of the national election and other issues that feel like they have more urgency."

Fourteen candidates are vying for the board, which is split into five geographical districts. Voters will elect the board Nov. 2. The hopefuls have a wide range of skills and experience. They range from hospital administrators to small-business owners.

Last November, voters approved Proposition 414, creating the district and authorizing the tax increase. Maricopa Integrated Health System, a \$780 million county-run operation, includes medical and mental hospitals in Phoenix and 11 Valley clinics that serve mostly the county's poor and uninsured.

The new board could collect up to \$40 million in property taxes during the first year. If the board levied the full amount, the average homeowner would pay about \$22 more each year.

The county's Board of Supervisors acts as the interim board and has approved major policy decisions on behalf of the district. But Greene said the new board will have plenty to do.

"It's really important we elect a strong board that has good experience and that wants to truly improve the hospital system and strengthen it, as opposed to closing it," Greene said.

Brian Goedken, 36, of Chandler, said he could find little information about the health care district election.

Goedken said he doesn't like leaving the ballot blank or leaving it up to guesswork. And he feels this election may become vital in the future.

"I think it will become more important in the next 10 years as health care issues get pushed more and more to the forefront," he said.

Email this article
Print this article
Most popular pages

[Click to send](#)
[Click to print](#)
[Today](#) | [This Week](#)